

“Doing Justice” (בעושי משפט) to the Dead Sea Scrolls: Reading 1QS 8:1-4 in Literary and Sectarian Context

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Introduction

Among the various Dead Sea Scrolls appears a document that was discovered in the first Qumran cave,¹ commonly referred to as the Community Rule. Within that document appears the following rather positive passage:

In the Community Council [there shall be] twelve men and three priests, perfect in everything that has been revealed about all the law to implement truth, justice, judgment, compassionate love and unassuming behaviour of each person to his fellow to preserve faithfulness on the earth with firm purpose and repentant spirit in order to atone for sin, doing justice and undergoing trials in order to walk with everyone in the measure of truth and the regulation of time.²

בעצת היחד שנים עשר איש וכוהנים שלושה תמימים בכול הנגלה מכול
התורה לעשות אמת וצדקה ומשפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת איש אמ רעהו
לשמור אמונה בארץ ביצר סמוך ורוח נשברה ולרצת עוון בעושי משפט
וצרת מצרפ ולהתהלך עם כול ב{ס} מדת האמת ובתכול העת³

1QS 8:1-4

This passage has at times been used as an intertext to support claims pertaining to the future expectations of both early Jesus movements and the historical Jesus himself (see e.g. Horsley 1987:165-284, 200, 201-208; 1992:175, 198-199, 206-209; 1995:39; 2003:79-104; 2011, esp. 205-211; cf. Kaylor 1994:187; Davies & Allison 1997:55, esp. n. 119; Allison 1998:142; Van

¹ To simplify matters, the present discussion will overlook the fragments of this text discovered in cave four. Considering these fragments would not have altered or weakened the current argument and conclusion.

² This article quotes from García Martínez (1994) when featuring translations of Dead Sea Scrolls.

³ The Hebrew text derives from Abegg (2004:30), as it appears in the edition by Parry & Tov (see bibliography).

Aarde 2011:1 n. 3). In particular, the passage has functioned as an intertext to support the notion that Jesus and some of his earliest movements foresaw the future restoration and liberation of greater Israel *in toto*, including outsiders. The claim is probably true that the historical Jesus proclaimed some form of liberation of Jewish (and gentile) outsiders, whether it be in this world or the next. As far as it relates to the early Jesus movements, however, this claim goes against the more standard scholarly conviction that these movements expected the liberation of insiders and the condemnation of outsiders at the final judgment.

Without getting involved in this larger New Testament debate,⁴ the current article wishes to address the appropriateness of using 1QS 8:1-4 as an intertext without taking its literary and sectarian contexts into consideration. With the term “literary context,” the present author means not only the pericope’s context in the Community Rule as such, but also its context within the larger collection of Dead Sea Scrolls. In this regard, I fully agree with the following statement by Weren (2015:1-2): “In order to prevent that an intertextual analysis becomes bogged down in subjective links, the *intertextual* analysis must always be preceded by an *intratextual* analysis.” With the term “sectarian context,” the present author means the social context within which the *sectarian* Dead Sea Scrolls were authored, excluding from consideration those texts that did not *originate* with the “Dead Sea sects,” as I prefer to call them. The term “Dead Sea sects” includes all the chronologically, geographically and socially diverse sectarian communities and factions responsible for authoring the original literature later discovered at Qumran. Although it is very likely that these Dead Sea sects should be identified with the Essene movement, the present article will neither assume nor discuss this identification. This is not to deny that the Dead Sea sects were Essenes, but rather to ignore this question altogether, since it adds little to the current discussion. The legitimacy of calling these communities “sects” is perhaps an open question, but to the extent that they deliberately separated themselves from mainstream Judaism – if not physically, then at least mentally and emotionally – it remains valid to refer to them as sects. The literary and sectarian contexts overlap in as far as the literary content of the Dead Sea Scrolls betray the social context in which these documents originated.

⁴ For more information on the relationship between 1QS 8:1-4 and the historical Jesus, including especially the Sayings Gospel Q, see the more comprehensive discussion in Howes 2014.

This article will unfold in a centripetal manner. Firstly, it will treat the commonalities among all the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls. The content of the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that the different Dead Sea sects had quite a lot in common. Secondly, the discussion will direct its focus specifically to the Community Rule. Finally, we will look at 1QS 8:1-4 in particular. Throughout this process, the focus will be on the relationship between judgment and boundary demarcation, which will function as the hermeneutical key to unlock the meaning of 1QS 8:1-4.

1. The *sectarian* Dead Sea Scrolls

The sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls perceive and portray the world in dualistic terms (cf. Schiffman 1994:149; Grossman 2008:5; see Collins 1997a:45-51, 99-106, 125-126, 142, 150-151; Levison 2006:191-192; Qimron 2006:195-202; Nickelsburg 2008:23-31). They unequivocally identify the people of greater Israel, including especially her leaders, as outsiders (Schiffman 1994:380-381; Arnold 2006:27-28; Davies 2008:38-39; see Harrington 2008:187-203; Newsom 2008:13-21; Timmer 2008:389-396). These writings feature many different insulting soubriquets of their Jewish kinsmen, including lot of Belial, devilish assembly, sons of darkness, lot of darkness, enemies, traitors, rebels, vicious men, vipers, fire-starters, lion cubs, viper's venom, serpent's venom, sinners, sons of deceit, men of injustice, sowers of fraud, hypocrites, wretched ones and council of futility. The citizens and leadership of greater Israel are charged with a plethora of crimes, which may be subdivided into the following categories: (1) an inability to obey the Torah, deliberate noncompliance, abandoning and abhorring God's covenant and even God himself, disloyalty, acting in their own interest, scheming against God's teachings and refusing to partake in God's covenant; (2) fornication, unclean actions, polluting the temple and desecrating the Sabbath and holy feasts; (3) apostasy, idolatry and fornicating with strangers; (4) persecuting, hating, despising, begrudging and pilfering from their kinsmen; (5) injustice, brutality, pilfering from the poor and tyrannizing the populace; (6) delusion, lunacy, stupidity, incomprehension and the absence of enlightenment; (7) taking revenge and masterminding wickedness against the community; (8) dishonesty, deceitfulness, deception, artificiality, (malevolent) slyness, sedition, withholding information and fraud; (9) greediness, prosperity and the absence of compassion for the poor; (10) impertinence,

smugness, arrogance, insolent eagerness, lack of respect, debauchery and egotism; and (11) intolerance and impatience.⁵

It should be clear from this brief overview that the Dead Sea sects did not in any way see themselves as part of greater Israel (cf. Qimron 2006:195; Davies 2008:33; Newsom 2008:16). As far as these sects were concerned, they were themselves the exclusive embodiment of the “actual” Israel (Collins 1997a:91; Shemesh 2002:54; Blenkinsopp 2005:11; Brooke 2005:50-51; Lawrence 2005:87, 89, 90, 99; Horsley 2006:50, 52; Davies 2008:33; Harrington 2008:203). Outsiders were therefore not part of the real Israel. According to Davies (2008:33), the word “Israel” is used by the Dead Sea sects in three distinct ways: (1) as a self-designation for the in-group; (2) as a reference to an illegitimate nation of days gone by, who were rightfully punished during the Babylonian exile; and (3) as a reference to the existing and similarly illegitimate Jewish out-group.

As the foregoing taxonomy reveals, the Dead Sea sects failed and/or refused to acknowledge any measure of corporate guilt. To their minds, they did not in any way share in the wrongdoings of either their forefathers or greater Israel (Himmelfarb 2001:30; see Shemesh 2002:52-59; Blenkinsopp 2005:19-20; Davies 2008:33-36; cf. e.g. CD 2:7-10; 3:13-14). Rather, they were the only people alive with an accurate understanding of the Torah, so that it was impossible for Jewish outsiders to live in agreement with the commandments of God (VanderKamm & Flint 2002:262; Lawrence 2005:87; Arnold 2006:40; Harrington 2008:201; Timmer 2009:347; cf. Grossman 2008:1; Nickelsburg 2008:24; see Hempel 2003:69-76; Brooke 2005:57-59).⁶ Among other pieces of evidence, this dualistic worldview is illustrated in the rituals by which new members were initiated. It was expected of new initiates to confess both individual and communal transgressions as former members of greater Israel, before making a vow that they would turn back to the Torah (1QS 1:24-2:1, 5:8; Hempel 2003:74; Daise 2007:154; Kapfer 2007:154; cf. Timmer 2009:347). Demonic spirits had manipulated the whole of greater Israel, causing them to subsist in incessant error (Collins 1997a:17, 91; Arnold 2006:28). As a consequence, the promises of the covenant were accepted as applying

⁵ Cf. 1QS 1:23; 3:20-21; 4:8-11, 19; 5:12; 4Q257 frag. 1, 3:1-7; CD 1:1-4; 3:6-21; 4:12-19; 5:16-17; 8:5-6; 19:13-19; 20:8-12; 4Q266 1:10; 4Q267 frag. 2, 1:6-9; frag. 2, 2:1; frag. 3, 2:9-13; 4Q162 frag. 1, 2:6-8; 4Q163 frag. 26:1-3; 4Q165 frag. 6:1-6; 4Q169 frags. 3-4:2, 8; 1QpHab 3:4-6; 8:8-13; 12:1-15; 13:1-4; 4Q171 1:26-27; 3:7-8; 4:8; 1Q22 1:6-11; 4Q390 frag. 2, 1:8-10; 4Q386 2:3-4; 3:1; 1QH 10:16; 11:6-18; 21:16; 4Q430 frag. 1:1-7; 1Q34 frag. 3, 2:3-4; 4Q400 frag. 1, 1:14-16; 4Q280:7.

⁶ Cf. 1QS 1:20-26; 5:11; 5:7-13; CD 1:1-4; 4Q397 frags. 7-8:7-11; 11Q13 2:12; 4Q162 frag. 1, 2:6-8; 4Q163 frag. 23:14; 1QpHab 2:1-10; 5:5-6, 11-12; 8:10; 4Q171 2:14-15; 4Q390 frag. 1:7-10; 1QH 6:5-6, 24-25.

exclusively to the in-group (Nickelsburg 2008:24; Timmer 2008:396; cf. Brooke 2005:51). In sum, the Dead Sea sects regarded themselves to be the legitimate substitution of greater Israel and its defective cult (Timmer 2009:342, 344). There existed only two groups on earth: those who belonged to the sectarian movement⁷ and the rest of humanity (cf. Schiffman 1994:65; see Harrington 2008:187-203).

Such an austere sectarian state of mind influenced their understanding and expectation of the apocalyptic future. According to their brand of soteriology, God had chosen and reserved the Dead Sea sects for apocalyptic salvation (Collins 1997a:17; Qimron 2006:195).⁸ God's forgiveness, liberation and mercy applied exclusively to insiders. Conversely, outsiders were denied any access whatsoever to God's salvation, forgiveness and mercy (Timmer 2008:395).⁹ One of the most prevalent themes in the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls is that of "judgment" (Knibb 2010:413). Not surprisingly, these writings view the future condemnation of greater Israel as a positive event. To some extent, this is understandable, since the condemnation of greater Israel equals the salvation of the Dead Sea sects. The latter explains why these writings do not hesitate to refer to the future punishment of outsiders as proof of God's "merciful judgment."¹⁰ In fact, the Dead Sea sects apparently delighted at the mere thought of Israel's obliteration.¹¹ In their estimation, greater Israel was not deserving of divine forgiveness or mercy. The sects behind the Dead Sea Scrolls anticipated the complete eradication of all gentiles during the apocalyptic end (see Schiffman 1994:371, 379, 380-382). More importantly for our purposes, they likewise foresaw a wholesale annihilation of all Jewish outsiders at the apocalypse (Collins 1997a:108, 122; 1998:157, 171, 173; Qimron 2006:195, 197; cf. Puech 2006:261, 263, 279; Nickelsburg 2008:24; see Shemesh 2002:55-57).¹² In the afterlife, these Jewish outsiders

⁷ The reference here to the Dead Sea sects as a "movement" is no more than a handy way to connote the idea that there were commonalities among individual sectarian groups. The term "movement" here references all the constituent groups, although there may be minor exceptions.

⁸ Cf. 1QS 11:9-15; 11Q5 18:16; 19:10, 13-14; 24:6-7, 11; 11Q6 frag. a:5-7; frag. b:2; 4Q381 frag. 15:2; frag. 33:4-5; 1QH 4:11-23; 5:4-5, 20-23; 8:16-17, 24-26; 9:21-27, 31-33; 10:22-23; 12:37; 13:4-6; 14:8-9; 15:28-31, 34-35; 17:14-15, 31-34; 18:15-16, 21; 19:7-12, 29-32; 1Q35 frag. 1:1-11; 4Q428 frag. 7:1-2; 4Q521 frag. 2, 2:7-13; 4Q504 frag. 4:6-7; 4Q506 frags. 131-132:11-14; 4Q434 frag. 1, 1:4-7.

⁹ Cf. 1QS 2:7-8; 10:20; 4Q256 4:1-2; 4Q257 frag. 1, 2:4-5; 3:1-7; 4Q260 frag. 1, 5:1; 4Q496 frag. 12, 4:1; 11Q20 frag. 20:1-7; 1QpHab 6:10-12; 7:16; 4Q201 2:15-16; 1QH 14:32; 11Q11 3:6; 4Q280:1-7

¹⁰ Cf. 1QH 14:9; 4Q427 frag. 7, 1:21-22; 2:15; 4Q434 frag. 1, 1:7; 4Q200 frag. 7:5-7; 4Q491, frags. 8-10, 1:6.

¹¹ Cf. 1QH 19:22-23; 4Q427 frag. 1:4-6; 1QM 13:16; 4Q496 frag. 3, 1:9; 4Q163 frags. 18-19:1-4; 4Q381 frag. 33:5-6.

¹² Cf. 1QS 4:14; 5:12-13; 4Q257 frag. 1:3; CD 2:5-9, 20-21; 8:1-6; 19:13-19; 4Q267 frag. 2, 2:19-21; 1QM 1:5-10; 4:2; 6:3; 11:1, 6-7; 15:1-3, 9-11; 18:12; 4Q496 frag. 11, 4:1; 11Q19 62:13-16; 4Q161 frags. 2-4, 2:1-6; 4Q163 frags. 4-6, 2:12-18; frags. 18-19:1-4; 4Q169 frags. 1-2:3-4; frags. 3-4:2, 9-10; 1QpHab 6:10-12; 4Q171 2:7-8; 3:12-13; 4Q201 1:1; 2:12-17; 4Q542 2:8; 1Q22 1:10-11; 4Q375 1:4-5; 4Q390 frag. 2, 1:6-7; 1QH 12:20; 14:17-19, 29-32; 4Q280:4-5; 4Q286 frag. 7, 2:6-8.

would suffer endless agony in Sheol.¹³ It follows that there would not be any people left on earth after the apocalypse besides the members of the Dead Sea sects (Schiffman 1994:382). The re-establishment of Israel involved the extermination of all other people, leaving behind only the “genuine Israel” in the form of the Dead Sea sects (Harrington 2008:203; cf. Collins 1997a:17; Puech 2006:281; Davies 2008:39; Ginsburskaya 2010:85).¹⁴

Yet, the apocalyptic end would be directly preceded by the “end of days” (אֶחָרִית הַיָּמִים), an eschatological period described in some of the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls. The so-called end of days entailed the assessment and refinement of the Dead Sea sects, as well as the reinstatement of the rightful temple cult by instituting a new temple (cf. VanderKam & Flint 2002:264; Arnold 2006:28; see Schiffman 1994:391-394; Collins 1997a:56-58; 1997b:79-82; 1998:157). According to Timmer (2009:342), the time of assessment should be distinguished from the end of days. This claim seems to be based on a misreading of Collins (1997a:52-70), who in truth describes the assessment and refinement of insiders as an essential part of the end of days. Be that as it may, the new temple was in all likelihood not to be an actual building, but rather the members themselves, who would embody the sanctuary through perfect conduct and ritual cleanliness (Collins 1997a:58, 60; cf. VanderKam & Flint 2002:264; Harrington 2008:197; Klawans 2010:384; see Horsley 2006:47-48). To complicate matters, the Qumran people already viewed themselves as a stand-in for the Jerusalem temple before the advent of the end of days (see Kapfer 2007:164-165, 169-172). Hence, the difference between the two temples must have entailed a different degree of individual and corporate holiness. At any rate, the definitive and final sanctuary would only be erected at the apocalyptic end (Collins 1997a:58, 60, 108; cf. Knibb 2010:415-416).

The end of days also included the emergence of two distinct messiahs, namely a royal and a priestly messiah (cf. Hughes 1997:12; Neufeld 1997:121; VanderKam & Flint 2002:265; Werman 2009:294-295; see Collins 1997a:77-87; 1998:160-166; Knibb 2010:420-425). Both messiahs would in different ways be responsible for re-establishing the kingdom and temple of Israel. On the one hand, the kingly messiah would contribute to the latter by defeating the gentiles and pacifying greater Israel (cf. Werman 2009:294-295; see Collins 1997a:80-85, 90;

¹³ Cf. 1QS 2:8; 4:12; 4Q256 4:1; 4Q257 frag. 1, 2:4-5; 1QM 15:2; 18:11; 4Q496 frag. 3, 1:1-7; 1QpHab 10:3-5, 13; 4Q201 2:15-16; 4Q204 6:13-15; 4Q212 4:19-23; 4Q542 2:5-7; 1QH 21:16; 11Q11 3:7-12; 4:5-13; 4Q418 126:7; 4Q280:4-5; 4Q286 frag. 7, 2:4-5, 9.

¹⁴ Cf. 1QS 10:11, 13, 16; 4Q264 frag. 1:1-3; 4Q88 9:5-9; 1QH 10:23-24.

1997b:86; 1998:157-160). In the aftermath of military subjugation, this messianic king would govern all his conquered subjects and judge daily disputes like the kings of old (cf. Shiffman 1994:381-382; VanderKam & Flint 2002:266-267). On the other hand, the priestly messiah would contribute to the restoration of Israel's kingdom and temple by atoning for Israel's transgressions, maintaining the ritual purity and moral perfection of the Dead Sea sects, and performing his duties as instructor and judge (cf. VanderKam & Flint 2002:267; see Collins 1997a:85-87; Arnold 2006:194-197). These developments should not be mistaken for those events that would accompany the final apocalypse (cf. Timmer 2009:342; see Collins 1997b:75, 79-85). The definitive, post-apocalyptic temple building would only be constructed after the apocalypse and final judgment (cf. Puech 2006:279). The same goes for the annihilation of all outsiders. In other words, the Dead Sea sects foresaw a period in the future that would directly precede the apocalyptic end, and prepare for its ultimate arrival.

2. The Community Rule

The themes discussed in the previous section feature prominently in the Community Rule (Lawrence 2005:100; cf. Klawans 2010:381; see Levison 2006:191-192). To be more specific, the dualistic mindset of the *Yahad*¹⁵ is treated systematically in the passage on the two spirits, which features in 1QS 3:13-4:26 (Schiffman 1994:149; Broshi 2006:237-238; Hempel 2008:390; Nickelsburg 2008:24; cf. Qimron 2006:195; see Collins 1997a:10, 38-41, 101, 105; 1998:153-154; Arnold 2006:73-74). It is explained by this text that God carefully separated the entirety of humanity into two distinct groups when creating the cosmos. In his divine wisdom, God predetermined each person to live in accordance with one of two unchanging spirits, namely the spirit of truth and light or the spirit of deceit and darkness (1QS 3:19, 25; cf. Broshi 2006:237; Timmer 2009:345-346; Knibb 2010:408; see Shemesh 2002:52-53; Levison 2006:186-188). Those living according to the spirit of light are often referred to as the “sons of light” (בני אור), and are constituted in whole by the members of the *Yahad*. Conversely, those living according to the spirit of darkness are often referred to as the “sons of darkness” (בני חושך), and are constituted in whole by non-members (Arnold 2006:34; Harrington 2008:191; Nickelsburg 2008:24; cf. Horsley 2006:42; Newsom 2008:13). In order to join the *Yahad*, one had to love the former and hate the latter (1QS 1:9-11; cf. Arnold

¹⁵ In secondary literature, the community behind this writing is often referred to as the *Yahad* (יהד), which is the Hebrew term used by the scroll itself to refer to its own members. This term literally means “community.”

2006:34, 53, 57-58, 68, 73-74; Newson 2008:17; Timmer 2008:395). Eviction from the *Yahad* entailed being regarded from that point forward as a son of darkness, and no longer belonging to the sons of light (Arnold 2006:78; see Shemesh 2002:46-52).

The Community Rule tells us that the sons of light originated from a fountain of light. They were not only ruled by the “prince of lights” (שר אורים), but also sustained by the God of Israel and his “angel of truth” (מלאך אמתו) (cf. Nickelsburg 2008:24). The traits of these sons of light included goodness, humbleness and wisdom. Because of their inherently good nature, their ultimate fate would comprise of “plentiful peace in a long life, fruitful offspring with all everlasting blessings, eternal enjoyment with endless life, and a crown of glory with majestic raiment in eternal light” (1QS 4:7-8; cf. VanderKam & Flint 2002:261; Timmer 2009:351).¹⁶ On the other side of the tracks, the sons of darkness derived from a source of darkness. They were ruled by the “angel of darkness” (מלאך חושך), who caused their sinful actions (Schiffman 1994:149; Nickelsburg 2008:24). The traits of these sons of darkness included evilness, dishonesty and greediness. Their apocalyptic fate would include “a glut of punishments at the hands of the angels of destruction, for eternal damnation for the scorching wrath of the God of revenge, for permanent error and shame without end with the humiliation of destruction by the fire of the dark regions” (1QS 4:12-13; cf. VanderKam & Flint 2002:261).¹⁷ 1QS 4:14 goes on to claim that these outsiders would be utterly obliterated and exterminated at the apocalyptic end (Puech 2006:271). The function of such extensive annihilation was to eradicate injustice, deceit and sin from the world *ad infinitum* (1QS 4:18-20; cf. Collins 1997a:116; 1997b:82, 86; 1998:153; Timmer 2009:343, 344; Knibb 2010:413). As in the rest of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the authors of the Community Rule believed that apocalyptic salvation and punishment had been preordained by God, even if the actual conduct of individuals determined innocence and blameworthiness in each individual case (cf. Schiffman 1994:150, 380; Collins 1997a:44, 116, 142; VanderKam & Flint 2002:264; see Arnold 2006:64-66; Broshi 2006:235-246; Timmer 2009:345-347, 350-352).

Before the ultimate end, however, the Community Rule foresees a period of severe refinement and cleansing. At the time when the Community Rule was authored, this preparatory period was still to be initiated (see Collins 1997b:80-81; 2010:168). In other words, this preliminary

¹⁶ ורוב שלום באורך ימים ופרות זרע עם כול ברכות עד ושמחת עולמים בחיי נצח וכליל כבוד עם מדת הדר באור עולמים.

¹⁷ לרוב נגועים ביד כול מלאכי חבל לשחת עולמים באף עברת אל נקמות עד עם כלמת כלה באש מחשכים.

stage was also viewed as part of the *Yahad*'s eschatological future, even if it were to precede the apocalyptic end (Himmelfarb 2001:31; Horsley 2006:42). To clarify, the *Yahad* looked forward to a specific period of time in the future, but earlier than the apocalypse and final judgment, when God would purify and refine his chosen people (cf. 1QS 4:20). Such decontamination pertained only to the Dead Sea sects themselves, and not to greater Israel (cf. Flint 1997:60). The belief in a period of internal refinement raises the question of why the so-called "sons of light," preordained for apocalyptic salvation, would need to be purified. The answer lies in their particular brand of demonology. Even if the sons of light were not ruled by the spirit of darkness like the rest of humanity, they were nevertheless influenced by it (Collins 1998:153; Knibb 2010:408; cf. Arnold 2006:74; see Levison 2006:177-185). According to the Community Rule (4:23), people's hearts were inhabited by both the spirits of light and darkness. This pertained also to the sons of light. The Dead Sea sects believed that all people, members and non-members included, were made up of nine distinct parts (Broshi 2006:238-239; Knibb 2010:408; cf. 4Q186). Since the number seven is uneven, every person on earth belongs either to the camp of darkness or the camp of light, depending on which spirit controlled the majority of those seven parts. In other words, the sons of light also experienced the influence of the spirit of darkness, even if they were for the most part controlled by the spirit of light. Every so often, the angel of darkness would cause an insider to stray from the path of righteousness (1QS 3:21-24; 11:9-10; cf. VanderKam & Flint 2002:261; Puech 2006:271).

Yet, as we have seen, the sons of light had exclusive access to divine clemency. Even though the benchmark was perfection (e.g. 1QS 2:8-9; cf. Lawrence 2005:86, 92; Newsom 2008:17; Collins 2010:162; see Arnold 2006:41-43, 58, 78-80), the *Yahad* knew full well that they presently lacked absolute and total perfection (Shemesh 2002:56; Puech 2006:271, 272; cf. Lawrence 2005:97; Timmer 2009:352; see Qimron 2006:197-202; Ginsburskaya 2010:77-90). For this reason, they anticipated a period before the apocalyptic end when every son of light would be wholly purified by God (1QS 4:20-21). Due to such a rigorous process of cleansing, this period would entail the achievement of "perfect behaviour" and the complete nonappearance of injustice amidst the sons of light (1QS 4:22-23; cf. Flint 1997:60). Such purification and perfection was necessary to prepare for the final judgment, since it would enable God to liberate the *Yahad* while condemning the sons of deceit (1QS 4:22-26; cf. Arnold 2006:42; Puech 2006:271; Timmer 2009:343, 344). Crucially, the futurist epoch of preparation

sketched here should in all likelihood be equated with the eschatological “end of days” (אחרית הימים) discussed in the previous section.

A lexical survey supports the foregoing summative analysis. The verb “judge” (שפט) and the noun “judgment” (משפט) feature variously in the Community Rule to convey five distinct meanings: (1) something that must be exercised internally by those who form part of the in-group, in the sense of “justice” and “discernment”;¹⁸ (2) legal proceedings performed either *within* the community *before* the “end of days” or *by* the community *during* the “end of days”;¹⁹ (3) the time of apocalyptic judgment;²⁰ (4) this-worldly admonishing of the community by God;²¹ and (5) full-scale condemnation of the out-group by God at the apocalyptic end.²² The second, fourth and fifth meanings are particularly significant to the overall purpose of the current article.

3. 1QS 8:1-4

No interpretation of 1QS 8:1-4 should be attempted without taking into account the information that precedes this section. As with the passage on the two spirits, 1QS 8:1-16 treats the intervening period of refinement and purification. On the one hand, the featuring of future-tense verbs and future-directed temporal phrases leave little doubt that this pericope deals with the future (cf. Berg 2007:167-168, esp. n. 20, 21, 23, 26; Collins 2010:161). On the other hand, the featuring of events that are still to occur, like the “atonement of the earth” (לכפר בעד הארץ) and the “rendering of retribution to the wicked” (ולהשב לרשעים גמולם) (1QS 8:6-7, 10), indicate that these events precede the apocalypse. At this interim period, Jewish and gentile outsiders are still in the world. Their condemnation must await the final judgment (Hempel 2008:56). As with the sectarian Qumran scrolls that pertain to the end of days, 1QS 8:5-15 imagines the in-group of the messianic period to be a kind of replacement temple (Collins 1997a:60, 148; Horsley 2006:47; cf. VanderKam & Flint 2002:264; Lawrence 2005:87; Arnold 2006:42; Ginsburskaya 2010:85). Yet, the phrase “when these things [or men]²³ exist in Israel” (בהיות אלה בישראל) in 1QS 8:4 clearly illustrates that there existed a prerequisite for the initiation of

¹⁸ Cf. 1QS 1:5; 3:1; 5:4; 6:23; 8:9; 9:5; 10:25; 11:2, 5.

¹⁹ Cf. 1QS 5:3, 6; 6:9, 22, 24; 8:2, 3, 25; 9:7, 15, 17.

²⁰ Cf. 1QS 4:20.

²¹ Cf. 1QS 10:11, 13, 16, 18, 23; 11:10, 12, 14.

²² Cf. 1:26; 5:12–13; 8:6–7, 10; 10:20.

²³ The possibility should not be ignored that the demonstrative pronoun אלה actually refers to the fifteen men of the preceding verses (Berg 2007:166-167, esp. n. 18; cf. The translation of Wise, Abegg & Cook 2004:31).

this messianic age (cf. Collins 2010:162). 1QS 8:1-4 describes this prerequisite. The text starts by predicting that “in the *Yahad* Council [there shall be] twelve men and three priests.”²⁴ Even though scholars disagree about the precise meaning of the term “*Yahad* Council” (עצת היחד), it seems most probable that the term acted as a substitutive self-designation for the community proper, perhaps applying particularly when they were congregated in one or more of their community gatherings (Berg 2007:165-166; Collins 2010:161; cf. Arnold 2006:34 n. 25, 36; Kapfer 2007:160; see Hempel 2003:75; 2008:44, 46, 49-54; Metso 2008:72-77, 80-81).

As far as the reference to “twelve men and three priests” (שנים עשר איש וכוהנים שלושה) is concerned, a decidedly persuasive case has been made by Berg (2007:161-177) that they were an elite group *within* the (council of the) *Yahad* (cf. Collins 1998:176; 2010:161-162; *pace* Metso 2008:78-84). These individuals should therefore not merely be understood as a symbolic designation of the community proper. The numbers “twelve” and “three” do in all likelihood respectively reference Israel’s twelve and Levi’s three tribes (cf. Hempel 2008:54; Metso 2008:81; Collins 2010:162). Additional support comes from 4Q164. In this text, the number “twelve” ([...] שנים עשר) is pertinently associated with “the heads of the tribes of Israel” (ראשי שבטי ישראל). Reading these two texts side-by-side almost forces a conclusion that reads the twelve men and three priests in 1QS 8:1 as *leaders* of Israel’s traditional tribes (*pace* Metso 2008:81). Unlike the *Yahad* itself, this selection of tribal chiefs is typically portrayed as being not just “holy” (קודש) or “perfect” (תמים), but as treading in “perfect holiness” (תמים קודש) (cf. Collins 1998:176; 2010:162, 163; see Berg 2007:171-172). According to Arnold (2006:41-43), the phrase “perfect holiness” pertains to the *Yahad* as a whole, and not exclusively to the fifteen Jewish leaders. This seems unlikely, though, since the Community Rule uses the phrase in question here and elsewhere consistently in reference to the fifteen Jewish leaders, and only them. The Damascus Document likewise refers to leaders of the Dead Sea sects as persons of perfect holiness (Kapfer 2007:154). The term “perfect holiness” describes an increased level of holiness and perfection when compared to isolated occurrences of the words “perfect” and “holy” or “holiness.” The term denotes a state of complete and utter faultlessness. One day, it is imagined, such perfect holiness would be instituted and sustained via trials (Berg 2007:173). Tribal leaders would submit themselves voluntarily to such scrutiny. It is not explained in 1QS 8:1-4 who would judge during these proceedings. Yet, if this text is interpreted via both 1QS 9:7-21 and the Liturgy of the Tongues of Fire (4Q375; 4Q376; 1Q29), it seems most probable

²⁴ בעצת היחד שנים עשר איש וכוהנים שלושה.

that the judge would be either the *Maskil* or the priestly messiah (see Arnold 2006:194-197, 201; Berg 2007:173-176). Thus, the fifteen tribal leaders would subject themselves to a process of judgment, testing and cleansing directly before but also during their tenure.

As long as these individuals are perfectly holy, they would qualify to “implement truth, justice [and] judgment” (לעשות אמת וצדקה ומשפט) in the rest of the *Yahad*. It seems likely that this process has in mind the responsibility of the fifteen leaders to act as judges of their individual tribes. Both the War Scroll and the Damascus Document support the latter interpretation. According to 4Q491 frags. 1-3:9-10, priests, Levites and the “chiefs of the camps” (המחנות שרי) are in charge of judging the tribes before they enter into battle (cf. Arnold 2006:199). In CD 10:4-10, the leaders of the tribes of Israel and Levi are explicitly defined as “the judges of the congregation” (שפטי העדה) (cf. Metso 2008:67).²⁵ The intention behind this process of judgment is to “implement compassionate love and unassuming behaviour”²⁶ and to “preserve faithfulness on the earth with firm purpose and repentant spirit in order to atone for sin.”²⁷ It follows that the *Yahad*’s decontamination would occur by means of a process during which its members would be judged by the recently selected tribal leaders. Hence, the Community Rule predicts that there will be a messianic epoch during which a remnant of Israel will be cleansed and kept faultless through continuous judgment of the *Yahad*. Tribal leaders will remove imperfection from the *Yahad* to prepare for the final judgment (cf. Berg 2007:168). This process of judgment will lead to a perfect *Yahad* (see Kapfer 2007:169-170). This untarnished community will embody the temple through perfect behaviour. In addition, they will be thoroughly ready for the final judgment.

Conclusion

If 1QS 8:1-4 is considered in literary and sectarian context, the function and meaning of this text is illuminated. Far from describing a form of future judgment that is devoid of condemnation, it describes a preliminary eschatological step that is absolutely necessary for the future condemnation of outsiders, as well as the future liberation of insiders. As such, it is illegitimate to use this text as an intertext to support claims that the historical Jesus and/or one

²⁵ It should be noted that the numerical values differ in this text: the tribe of Levi (and Aaron) has four and the tribes of Israel have six, for a total of ten (Metso 2008:67).

²⁶ לעשות ואהבת חסד והצנע לבת.

²⁷ לשמור אמונה בארץ ביצר סמוך ורוח נשברה ולרצת עוון.

or more of the early Jesus movements expected a form of future judgment that would exclude the condemnation of gentile and/or Jewish outsiders. This conclusion remains true in spite of how legitimate these claims about Jesus and/or (some of) his early movements might be in their own right. Ultimately, the evidence is overwhelming that those responsible for the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls expected the future condemnation and annihilation of all outsiders.

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